WATERPROOF PERSONAL STORAGE SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is related to and claims priority from prior provisional applications Serial Number 60/417,680, filed 10/09/2002, entitled "WATERPROOF PERSONAL STORAGE SYSTEM", and Serial Number 60/495,337, filed 08/14/2003, entitled "WATERPROOF PERSONAL STORAGE SYSTEM", the contents of which are incorporated herein by this reference and are not admitted to be prior art with respect to the present invention by the mention in this cross-reference section.

BACKGROUND

This invention relates to providing a wearable waterproof storage system for protecting personal accessories, such as mobile phones and wallets, from water damage and/or the threat of theft.

Tourists, vacationers and aquatic-sport participants frequently find themselves in a public aquatic environment, such as a beach or pool, without an effective method for protecting personal valuables and accessories. Persons who are swimming or wading in water and desire to protect personal items, such as a mobile-phone, wallet, passport and the like from water damage or theft, have few options. Often, the person must choose between leaving the valuables in a dry area while engaging in the water activity or, alternatively, holding the valuables in a position that prevents or limits water damage. A relatively compact, easily accessible and waterproof personal storage system that can be worn about the body would permit safe and convenient storage of personal items, while the wearer is engaged in aquatic activities.

OBJECTS AND FEATURES OF THE INVENTION

A primary object and feature of the present invention is to provide a system for the protected storage of personal accessories by providing waterproof encasement about the stored personal accessories. It is a further object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that may be securely worn about the body of a person. It is another object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that provides easy access to the protected personal accessories by utilizing a simple screw-on cap arrangement. It is another object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that positions the screw-on cap assembly away from the body of the wearer.

It is another object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that provides access of sufficient size to permit passage of a thumb and at least one finger into the

interior of the waterproof encasement. It is another object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that may be worn around the waist of a person. It is yet another object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that may be worn as an article of clothing, such as a pair of shorts. It is yet another object and feature of the present invention to provide such a system that provides weep openings to allow fluid to drain from support areas around the perimeter of the waterproof encasement.

A further object and feature of the present invention is to provide such a system that is efficient, inexpensive and handy. Other objects and features of this invention will become apparent with reference to the following descriptions.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with a preferred embodiment hereof, this invention provides a liquid-submersible personal storage system suitable for waterproof storage of personal accessories adjacent the body of a wearer, comprising in combination: at least one liquid-impermeable case, structured and arranged to encase the personal accessories; wherein such at least one liquid-impermeable case comprises: at least one pouch, structured and arranged to contain the personal accessories, such at least one pouch comprising at least one access aperture structured and arranged to permit access to the personal accessories enclosed within such case; and at least one cap structured and arranged to removably seal such at least one access aperture; at least one support structured and arranged to support such at least one liquid-impermeable case adjacent the body of the wearer; wherein such at least one support is structured and arranged so that, when worn: such at least one cap is essentially parallel with an adjacent body portion of the wearer; and at least one flexible pouch is deformable, in use, between such at least one cap and the adjacent body portion of the wearer; and wherein such at least one access aperture permits passage of at least one thumb and at least one finger of an adult hand.

Moreover, it provides such a system wherein: such at least one access aperture comprises at least one screw-threadable engagement; and such at least one cap comprises at least one screw-threadable engager structured and arranged to threadably engage such at least one access aperture. Additionally, it provides such a system wherein such at least one cap comprises at least one grip assister structured and arranged to assist the wearer in gripping such at least one cap. Also, it provides such a system wherein: such at least one cap further comprises at least one retainer structured and arranged to retain such at least one cap to such at least one liquid-impermeable case; and such at least one retainer is structured and arranged to permit removal and sealing of such at least one access aperture by such at least one cap.

In addition, it provides such a system wherein such at least one pouch comprises at least one flexibly- conforming material structured and arranged to flexibly conform to the adjacent body portion of the wearer. And, it provides such a system wherein such at least one flexibly-conforming material comprises at least one moldable polymer. Further, it provides such a system wherein such at least one moldable polymer comprises blow-moldable, low-density polyethylene. Even further, it provides such a system wherein such at least one support comprises at least one cushion structured and arranged to cushion the adjacent body portion of the wearer from the personal accessories contained within such at least one liquid-impermeable case.

Moreover, it provides such a system wherein such at least one support comprises at least one protector structured and arranged to protect such at least one access aperture. Additionally, it provides such a system wherein such at least one protector comprises at least one cover flap. Also, it provides such a system wherein such at least one cover flap comprises at least one fastener structured and arranged to removably fasten such at least one protector in a position over such at least one access aperture. In addition, it provides such a system wherein such at least one fastener comprises at least one hook-and-loop fastener.

Furthermore, it provides such a system wherein such at least one support comprises a water-resistant outer cover structured and arranged to substantially cover such at least one liquid-impermeable case. And, it provides such a system wherein such at least one liquid-impermeable case is permanently fixed to such at least one support. Additionally, it provides such a system wherein such at least one outer cover comprises at least one neoprene sleeve.

Even further, it provides such a system wherein such at least one outer cover comprises at least one article of clothing. Even further, it provides such a system wherein such at least one article of clothing comprises short trousers. Even further, it provides such a system wherein such at least one support comprises at least one belt structured and arranged to permit such at least one support to be maintained adjacent the body of the wearer. Moreover, it provides such a system wherein such at least one belt comprises: at least one clasp retainer structured and arranged to clasp and removably retain such at least one belt adjacent the body of the wearer; and at least one length adjuster structured and arranged to adjust the length of such at least one belt.

It also provides such a system wherein said at least one support comprises at least one weep opening structured and arranged to allow fluid to pass through said at least one weep opening. And, it provides such a system wherein said at least one support comprises at least

one weep opening. It also provides such a system wherein said at least one neoprene sleeve comprises at least one weep opening structured and arranged to allow fluid to pass through said at least one weep opening.

In accordance with another preferred embodiment hereof, this invention provides a liquid-submersible personal storage system suitable for waterproof storage adjacent the body of a wearer, comprising in combination: at least one personal accessory; at least one liquid-impermeable case, to encase such at least one personal accessory; wherein such at least one liquid-impermeable case comprises: at least one pouch, to contain such at least one personal accessory, such at least one pouch comprising at least one access aperture arranged to permit access to such at least one personal accessory enclosed within such case; and at least one cap to removably seal such at least one access aperture; at least one support arranged to support such at least one liquid-impermeable case adjacent the body of the wearer; wherein such at least one support is arranged so that, when worn: such at least one cap is essentially parallel with an adjacent body portion of the wearer; and at least one flexible pouch is deformable, in use, between such at least one cap and the adjacent body portion of the wearer; and wherein such at least one access aperture permits passage of at least one thumb and at least one finger of an adult hand. It also provides such a system wherein said at least one support comprises at least one weep opening structured and arranged to allow fluid to pass through said at least one weep opening.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a perspective view, partially in section, of a waterproof personal storage system worn about the waist of a submerged swimmer according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 shows a front perspective view of the waterproof personal storage system according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 shows a top view of the waterproof personal storage system of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 shows a diagrammatic view, partially in section, illustrating a user accessing personal accessories stored within the waterproof personal storage system of FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 shows a rear perspective view of the waterproof personal storage system of FIG 2.

FIG. 6 shows a sectional view through section 6-6 of FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 shows a front view, partially in section, of the waterproof pouch retained within the waterproof personal storage system according to the preferred embodiments of the present

invention.

FIG. 8 shows a sectional view through section 8-8 of FIG. 7.

FIG. 9 shows a perspective view of a compact waterproof personal storage system according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 shows a perspective view, partially in section, of the compact waterproof personal storage system of FIG. 9.

FIG. 11 shows a sectional view through section 11-11 of FIG. 9.

FIG. 12 shows a perspective view, partially in section, of a waterproof personal storage system as an article of clothing worn by a submerged swimmer according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 13 shows a detailed perspective view of the waterproof personal storage system of FIG. 12.

FIG. 14 shows a sectional view through section 14-14 of FIG. 13.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE BEST MODE AND PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic sectional view of waterproof personal storage system **100** worn about the waist of a submerged swimmer **102,** according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In the embodiment of FIG. 1, waterproof personal storage system **100** is preferably configured as a belt-supported waist pack **104**, as shown. Preferably, waterproof personal storage system **100** provides a means for protected storage of personal accessories by providing secure waterproof encasement about stored personal accessories, as shown. Preferably, all materials used in the construction of waterproof personal storage system **100** are waterproof and/or water-resistant to permit prolonged and repeated submersion in water **110**, as shown.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of waterproof personal storage system **100,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 1. Preferably, the waist pack embodiment of waterproof personal storage system **100** consists of a sheath-like protective outer covering **106** (herein embodying at least one support structured and arranged to support such at least one liquid-impermeable case adjacent the body of the wearer) that supports and encloses a flexible inner waterproof pouch **108**, as shown. Inner waterproof pouch **108** preferably contains an access aperture **120** through which the user may insert and remove stored personal accessories **122** (as further described in FIG. 4 below). Removable screw-threaded cap **124** (herein embodying at least one cap

structured and arranged to removably seal such at least one access aperture) is preferably used to seal access aperture **120** to block the passage of water into inner waterproof pouch **108**, as shown. Preferably, protective cover flap **118** (herein embodying wherein such at least one support comprises at least one protector structured and arranged to protect such at least one access aperture) is sewn or otherwise attached to protective outer covering **106** to cover and protect screw-threaded cap **124**, as shown. One or more fasteners, preferably hook-and-loop fasteners **126**, are used to securely position and retain protective cover flap **118** in place over access aperture **120**, as shown. Upon reading this specification those of skill in the art will understand that, under appropriate circumstances, such as availability of materials, user preference, etc., other fasteners, such as snaps, zippers, buttons, magnets, etc., may suffice.

Preferably sewn or otherwise attached to protective outer covering **106** is waist belt **112,** which includes two-part connector **114** and belt length adjuster **116**, as shown. Under appropriate circumstances, additional exterior detailing (such as indicia- containing banding **128**) may be applied to waist belt **112**, as shown. Preferably, weep holes **133** may be provided in protective outer covering **106** to permit fluid drainage.

FIG. 3 is a top view of waterproof personal storage system **100,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 2. Preferably, waist pack **104** has a compact body-conforming shape, as shown. In all embodiments of the present invention, access to waist pack **104** through protective outer covering **106** is preferably oriented away from the body of the wearer with screw-threaded cap **124** positioned approximately parallel to the body of the wearer (herein embodying wherein such at least one support is structured and arranged so that, when worn: such at least one cap is essentially parallel with an adjacent body portion of the wearer). Protective outer covering **106** is preferably constructed from a waterproof or water-resistant material, preferably having both flexible and elastic qualities, most preferably consisting of a closed-cell synthetic rubber, such as neoprene. To provide a durable and attractive finish, a neoprene "wet-suit"-type material, having a soft nylon fabric facing bonded onto the outer surface of the water-impermeable neoprene material, is highly preferred. Preferably, neoprene having a thickness of about 1.5mm to 2mm is preferred, however, under appropriate circumstances, a thickness of up to about 6mm may preferably be used if greater protection of inner waterproof pouch **108** is required. Outer covering **106** is preferably assembled by sewing multiple panels of neoprene fabric together using over-lock seam **129** (wherein two panels of neoprene are sewn along the edge as the two panels are held together with both outside surfaces

in contact). Over-lock seam stitching results in a raised seam on the inside of the outer cover, with no stitching visible on the outside. Under appropriate circumstances, other methods of assembling protective outer covering **106** may suffice, for example, blind-stitching, flat-lock seaming, seam-taping and/or bonding may be used to form seam **129**. Under appropriate circumstances, other waterproof and water-resistant outer covering materials or combinations of materials may be used in the construction of protective outer covering **106** (not limited to rubber, nylon, polyester, polymer-coated and "Gortex" fabrics).

Furthermore, it is preferred that the protective outer covering **106** comprises weep openings **133** (embodying herein wherein said at least one support comprises at least one weep opening) to allow water to pass out of the protective outer covering **106** and to provide a means for allowing the inner portion of the protective outer covering **106** to dry out (a weep opening being defined as an opening to permit the giving off or leaking of fluid). Most preferably, multiple weep openings **133** are provided in each waist pack **104**, as shown. Preferably, the weep openings **133** are circular, preferably about one-eighth to about one-quarter inch in diameter. Preferably, a small grommet having the desired central opening is utilized for the weep opening and is preferably sewn into the outer covering **106**. When the outer covering is neoprene, the weep opening **133** is preferably a small grommet opening (embodying herein wherein said at least one neoprene sleeve comprises at least one weep opening structured and arranged to allow fluid to pass through said at least one weep opening). Upon reading this specification it will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art that under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as economics, user preference, durability, etc., other methods of providing a weep opening, such as sewn fabric openings, etc., may suffice.

FIG. 4 is a diagrammatic sectional view of user **130** accessing personal accessories **122** stored within waterproof personal storage system **100,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 2. Preferably, the inside diameter of access aperture **120** is sized to permit user **130** to comfortably pass a thumb and at least one finger into the interior portion **132** of inner waterproof pouch **108** and to permit a wide range of personal accessories **122** to be passed through the opening, as shown (herein embodying wherein such at least one access aperture permits passage of at least one thumb and at least one finger of an adult hand). It has been determined through practical experimentation that an access aperture **120** having an inside diameter of about 3-1/2" is preferable for most applications. It should be noted that, under appropriate circumstances, access aperture **120** may be of a greater or smaller diameter size to

accommodate specific storage applications (ranging from a minimum diameter of about 2" to a maximum of about 6").

FIG. 5 is a rear perspective view of waterproof personal storage system **100,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 2. Preferably, back panel **132** of waist pack **104** consists of protective outer covering **106** over resilient padding **134** (herein embodying wherein such at least one support comprises at least one cushion structured and arranged to cushion the adjacent body portion of the wearer from the personal accessories contained within such at least one liquid-impermeable case), as shown. Waist belt **112** is preferably constructed from flat nylon webbing having a preferred width of about 1", as shown. Preferably, two-part connector **114** is similar in construction to side release buckle assembly No. P006, produced by Universal Mercantile Exchange, Inc., of Baldwin Park, CA, U.S.A. Waist belt **112** is preferably attached to protective outer covering **106** by machine sewing along seams **136,** as shown. Upon reading this specification it will be understood by those of skill in the art that under appropriate circumstances, such as user preference, availability of materials, economics, etc., other means of fastening waist pack **104** about the waist of the user, such as snaps, ties, buckles, hook and loop fasteners, etc., may suffice. For example, the ends of protective outer covering **106** may be formed into belt-like extensions removably connected by hook-and-loop fasteners.

FIG. 6 is the sectional view 6-6 of FIG. 2 and FIG. 5 illustrating a preferred interior configuration of waterproof personal storage system **100,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 2. Preferably, inner waterproof pouch **108** is securely and permanently positioned within protective outer covering **106;** however, protective outer covering **106** and inner waterproof pouch **108** are preferably separate elements, without mechanical or similar bonding between the two elements. This preferred arrangement permits a high degree of flexibility and movement within inner waterproof pouch **108** (thereby creating a versatile holder for containing a wide range of accessories and further allowing inner waterproof pouch **108** to be deformable, in use, between screw-threaded cap **124** and the adjacent body portion of the wearer). Under appropriate circumstances, outer covering **106** may be bonded to inner waterproof pouch **108,** along the perimeter of cover opening **138,** to create a double protective layer of waterproof material.

Preferably, access aperture **120** is positioned within a shallow, integrally-formed, indentation **140** within inner waterproof pouch **108,** permitting the top of screw-threaded cap **124** to reside approximately flush with the outer face of inner waterproof pouch **108,** as shown.

As illustrated in FIG. 6, a pre-formed, resilient pad **142** is positioned between inner waterproof pouch **108** and back panel **132** to cushion the body of the wearer from accessories contained within inner waterproof pouch **108**. Preferably, resilient pad **142** consists of closed-cell molded foam, such as gas-blown neoprene. Under appropriate circumstances, it may be preferred to omit resilient pad **142** to provide, for example, a less costly or especially compact waterproof personal storage system **100**. FIG. 6 further illustrates protective cover flap **118** in the preferred closed and secure position over access aperture **120** and screw-threaded cap **124**. The preferred applications of hook-and-loop fasteners **126**, sewn or otherwise attached to the perimeter of cover opening **138** and the underside of protective cover flap **118,** is also shown.

FIG. 7 is a front view of a typical inner waterproof pouch **108** as retained within waterproof personal storage system **100,** according to the preferred embodiments of the present invention. Preferably, inner waterproof pouch **108** (herein embodying at least one liquid-impermeable case, structured and arranged to encase the personal accessories; wherein such at least one liquid-impermeable case comprises: at least one pouch, structured and arranged to contain the personal accessories, such at least one pouch comprising at least one access aperture structured and arranged to permit access to the personal accessories enclosed within such case) and is a seamless design consisting of a flexible, liquid-impermeable, blow-moldable, polymeric material, such as low-density polyethylene (PE-LD). The preferred use of a blow-molding process in the production of inner waterproof pouch **108** produces a seamless and highly waterproof product, greatly reducing the potential of seam failure and leakage. Under appropriate circumstances, other materials (such as rubber, silicone rubber, or neoprene) and other construction methods (such as thermal seaming) may be used to accommodate such factors as production costs and/or ease of assembly. Although the preferred inner waterproof pouch **108** is illustrated as an essentially rectilinear molding, it should be noted that the shape and size of inner waterproof pouch **108** is not limited, and may be of alternate configuration, to meet the requirements of specific storage applications.

Grip- assisting recesses **162** are preferably formed into the top of screw-threaded cap **124** to assist the user in rotating the assembly on and off, as shown.

FIG. 8 is the sectional view 8-8 of FIG.7 illustrating the configuration of screw-threaded cap **124** of inner waterproof pouch **108,** according to the embodiment of FIG. 7. Preferably, screw-threaded cap **124** is constructed of a medium to high-density moldable plastic polymer, such as polypropylene, and preferably includes a set of integral threads **160,** as shown. A grip-

assisting recess **162** (herein embodying wherein such at least one cap comprises at least one grip assister structured and arranged to assist the wearer in gripping such at least one cap) is preferably formed into the top of screw-threaded cap **124** to assist the user in rotating the assembly on and off, as shown. Preferably, lanyard **144** is used to retain screw-threaded cap **124** to inner waterproof pouch **108**, as shown (herein embodying wherein such at least one cap further comprises at least one retainer structured and arranged to retain such at least one cap to such at least one liquid-impermeable case; and such at least one retainer is structured and arranged to permit removal and sealing of such at least one access aperture by such at least one cap). Lanyard **144** preferably consists of a molded flexible polymer element having a first end **146** secured to apertured tab **148** of inner waterproof pouch **108,** and a second end **150** rotatably attached to screw-threaded cap **124**, as shown. Ring-shaped element **152** of second end **150** is preferably positioned within continuous receiving channel **154** circumferentially formed within the perimeter sidewall **156** of screw-threaded cap **124**, as shown. Preferably, lanyard **144** firmly retains screw-threaded cap **124** to inner waterproof pouch **108** while permitting the user to freely rotate screw-threaded cap **124** without risk of detachment and loss. Under appropriate circumstances, other methods of retaining screw-threaded cap **124** may be utilized (e.g., lanyard cord attachment to protective outer covering **106**). Preferably, access aperture **120** consists of neck portion **158** having a complementary set of integral threads **161**, as shown (herein embodying such at least one access aperture comprises at least one screw-threadable engagement; and such at least one cap comprises at least one screw-threadable engager structured and arranged to threadably engage such at least one access aperture).

Under appropriate circumstances, various adjoining sections of neck portion **158** and indentation **140** may have a greater wall thickness to provide increased stiffness, thereby permitting portions of inner waterproof pouch **108** to remain in its preferred shape, as shown. Preferably, screw-threaded cap **124** is self-sealing when engaged on neck portion **158**. However, under appropriate circumstances, other sealing means (such as, for example, applied gaskets) may be used to increase water-resistance.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of compact waterproof personal storage system **170,** according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention. Preferably, compact waterproof personal storage system **170** consists of a sheath-like protective outer covering **106** supporting and enclosing a flexible to semi-rigid inner waterproof pouch **172** (herein embodying at least one liquid-impermeable case, structured and arranged to encase the personal

accessories; wherein such at least one liquid-impermeable case comprises: at least one pouch, structured and arranged to contain the personal accessories, such at least one pouch comprising at least one access aperture structured and arranged to permit access to the personal accessories enclosed within such case), as shown. Preferably, inner waterproof pouch **172** is approximately circular in shape, having an outer diameter of about 5" to 6-1/2", and a thickness of 1-1/2" to 2-1/2", as shown. Inner waterproof pouch **172** is preferably formed with an access aperture **174** (not shown, covered by screw-threaded cap **176**) through which the user may insert and remove stored personal accessories **122** (not shown). An attached screw-threaded cap **176** (herein embodying at least one cap structured and arranged to removably seal such at least one access aperture), having a preferred diameter of 4" to 5-1/2", is preferably constructed from plastic and is used to block the passage of water through access aperture **174**. Upon reading this specification it will be understood by those of skill in the art that under appropriate circumstances, such as cost, ease of fabrication and storage application, other sizes and configurations, such as square, triangular, waist-sized, thigh-sized, backpack-sized, etc., may suffice.

Preferably sewn or otherwise attached to protective outer covering **106** is waist belt **178,** which further comprises two-part connector **180** and belt length adjuster **182**, as shown. As in the prior embodiments of FIG. 1 through FIG. 7, protective outer covering **106** is preferably constructed from a "wet-suit"-type neoprene, however, under appropriate circumstances, other materials, including nylon, cotton, polyester, and rubber, may suffice. Preferably, waist belt **178** consists of narrow flat nylon webbing or cording, as shown.

Preferably, screw-threaded cap **176** is connected to inner waterproof pouch **172** by lanyard **144,** as described in the previous embodiment. Grip-assisting indentations **184** are preferably formed into the outer surface of screw-threaded cap **176**, as shown.

Furthermore, as described above, it is preferred that the protective outer covering **106** comprises weep openings **133** to allow water to pass out of the protective outer covering **106** and to provide a means for allowing the inner portion of the protective outer covering **106** to dry out. Most preferably, multiple weep openings **133** are provided, as shown. Preferably, the weep openings **133** are circular, preferably about one-eighth to about one-quarter inch in diameter. Preferably, a small grommet having the desired central opening is utilized for the weep opening and is preferably sewn into the outer covering **106**. Upon reading this specification it will be understood by those of skill in the art that under appropriate

circumstances, such as economics, user preference, durability, etc., other methods of providing a weep opening, such as sewn fabric openings, unbound holes, etc., may suffice.

FIG. 10 is a partial perspective view of compact waterproof personal storage system **170,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 9. Grip-assisting indentations **184** are preferably formed into the outer surface of screw-threaded cap **176,** as shown. Screw-threaded cap **176** may, under appropriate circumstances, be constructed of thin, lightweight metal or metallic-finished plastic. Injection or blow-molding using a polymer, such as polyethylene, is preferably used to form inner waterproof pouch **172**. Preferably, inner waterproof pouch **172** is securely sewn within protective outer covering **106** (herein embodying at least one support structured and arranged to support such at least one liquid-impermeable case adjacent the body of the wearer), as shown. Inner waterproof pouch **172** preferably includes a raised annular neck portion **186** around access aperture **174** having a set of integrally-formed receiving threads **188,** as shown.

FIG. 11 is the sectional view 11-11 of FIG. 9, illustrating a preferred interior configuration of compact waterproof personal storage system **170,** according to the embodiment of FIG. 9. Preferably, a pre-formed, resilient pad **142** is positioned between inner waterproof pouch **172** and back panel **190** to cushion the body of the wearer, as shown. Resilient pad **142** may also be used to permit compact waterproof personal storage system **170** to retain a desired shape, as shown. Under appropriate circumstances, other shape-retaining assemblies (such as, for example, molded plastic inserts) may be used to maintain the preferred shape of compact waterproof personal storage system **170**.

FIG. 12 is a diagrammatic sectional view of a waterproof personal storage system **200** worn as an article of clothing **202** by a submerged swimmer **102,** according to a highly preferred embodiment of the present invention. In the embodiment of FIG. 12, the preferred article of clothing **202** is a pair of short trousers **204**. It should be noted that the scope of the present invention will include other clothing embodiments that are preferably adapted to be worn by a person. Further, the term "article of clothing " may preferably include other outer body covering arrangements not limited to bathing suits, wet/dry thermal suits, pants, shirts, vests and the like.

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of clothing-type waterproof personal storage system **200,** according to the preferred embodiment of FIG. 12. Preferably, short trousers **204** consist of a wearable outer cover **206** (herein embodying at least one support structured and arranged to

support such at least one liquid-impermeable case adjacent the body of the wearer) consisting of one or more waterproof or water-resistant fabrics that may preferably include cotton, nylon, polyester or neoprene. Preferably, short trousers **204** are constructed with pocket **208**, adapted to support and retain inner waterproof pouch **108** (not shown, contained by pocket **208**) adjacent to the body of the wearer, as shown. Preferably, pocket **208** permits access to inner waterproof pouch **108** through pocket opening **210**, as shown. Unless otherwise noted, inner waterproof pouch **108** is preferably identical in material and construction to the illustrated inner waterproof pouch **108** of FIG. 1 through FIG. 8. Clothing-type waterproof personal storage system **200** preferably includes protective cover flap **212** (herein embodying wherein such at least one support comprises at least one protector structured and arranged to protect such at least one access aperture), sewn or otherwise attached to wearable outer cover **206**, as shown. Preferably, protective cover flap **212** covers and protects screw-threaded cap **124** and access aperture **120**, as shown. One or more fasteners, preferably hook-and-loop fasteners **126**, are used to securely position and retain protective cover flap **212** in place over screw-threaded cap **124** and access aperture **120**, as shown. Grip-assisting indentations **162** are preferably formed into the outer surface of screw-threaded cap **124**, as shown. Also, weep holes **133** may be provided in wearable outer cover **206**, as shown.

FIG. 14 is the sectional view 14-14 of FIG. 13, illustrating a preferred configuration of the wearable waterproof personal storage system **200**, according to the embodiment of FIG. 12. Access to inner waterproof pouch **108** through wearable outer cover **206** is preferably oriented away from the body of the wearer with screw-threaded cap **124** positioned approximately parallel to the body of the wearer (herein embodying wherein such at least one support is structured and arranged so that, when worn: such at least one cap is essentially parallel with an adjacent body portion of the wearer). Preferably, inner waterproof pouch **108** is securely and permanently positioned within pocket **208,** however, pocket **208** and inner waterproof pouch **108** are preferably separate elements without inter-attachment or bonding. This preferred arrangement permits a high degree of flexibility and movement within inner waterproof pouch **108** (thereby creating a versatile container for holding a wide range of accessories). Under appropriate circumstances, pocket **208** may be bonded to inner waterproof pouch **108**, along the perimeter of pocket opening **210**, to create a double protective layer of waterproof material. Preferably, a resilient pad **142** is positioned between inner waterproof pouch **108** and wearable inner cover **214** to protect the body of the wearer from accessories contained within inner

waterproof pouch **108**. Preferably, resilient pad **142** consists of closed-cell molded foam, such as gas-blown neoprene. Under appropriate circumstances, it may be preferred to omit resilient pad **142** to provide, for example, a less costly or especially lightweight embodiment of short trousers **204**. It is noted that the wearable outer cover **206** preferably comprises weep openings **133** and lanyard **144** as described above and as shown herein.

Although applicant has described applicant's preferred embodiments of this invention, it will be understood that the broadest scope of this invention includes such modifications as diverse shapes and sizes and materials. Such scope is limited only by the below claims as read in connection with the above specification.

Further, many other advantages of applicant's invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the above descriptions and the below claims.